Committee on Government Reform
Tom Davis, Chairman

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release   **Contact: David Marin/Scott Kopple**
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Do you own a computer? Your privacy may be at risk!

**2nd in a Series of Hearings Examining Concerns
with Peer-to-Peer (P2P) File Sharing Networks**

What: Government Reform Committee Hearing: "Overexposed: The Threats to Privacy & Security on File Sharing Networks"

When: Thursday, May 15, 2003, 10:00 a.m.

Where: Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building

Background:

A primary privacy and security concern raised by the use of popular P2P file-sharing programs is the potential that P2P users may be sharing on these networks computer files and folders containing sensitive personal information. A P2P user may be sharing these personal files inadvertently because of incorrect program configuration or intentionally because increased file-sharing earns the user preferential treatment on the networks. Using one peer-to-peer file-sharing program, **Government Reform Committee staff was able to easily find and download completed 1040 tax forms, attorney-client correspondence, internal business documents, government office correspondence, medical records, personal letters and emails, resumes, and other personal files.** Sharing such personal information can expose the P2P user to identity theft or other unwanted uses of their personal data.

An additional security concern associated with the use of popular P2P programs involves the spread of computer viruses, worms, and other malicious computer files. P2P programs connect together the computers of a great many unknown users – some of whom may be, either maliciously or unintentionally, sharing files containing computer viruses, worms, or other malicious computer files.

At the hearing, the Committee will release a staff report highlighting these important issues. In addition, at the hearing, the Committee will see a live demonstration of the way in which personal files, including completed 1040 tax forms, resumes, and personal letters and emails can easily be downloaded from the peer-to-peer file-sharing networks.

Witnesses:
Nathaniel S. Good, University of California, Berkeley, and author of *Usability and privacy: a study of Kazaa P2P file-sharing*
Dr. John Hale, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, University of Tulsa, and author of *P2P Fear and Loathing: Operational Hazards of File Trading Networks*
Jeffrey I. Schiller, Network Manager, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Derek S. Broes, Executive Vice President of Worldwide Operations, Brilliant Digital Entertainment
Alan B. Davidson, Associate Director, Center for Democracy and Technology
Mari J. Frank, Esq., Mari J. Frank, Esq. & Associates

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